

tion of the time. He was a brilliant and experienced naval captain and took with him 220 men, the cream of French science, including botanists, doctors, naturalists and a surgeon.

During the 18th century, Britain and France were in constant rivalry for control of the world's seas and following the success of Captain Cook's exploits in the Pacific, France was eager to match his achievements; Louis XVI personally contributed to the expedition. The voyage was expected to last four years and cover 150,000 km.

La Pérouse landed on Easter Island in April 1786; the bay where he anchored is named for him. He was on the island a very short time, eleven hours, but the French were observant and managed to see a great deal of the island during their visit. They left behind a pair of hogs, three sheep, and a pair of goats; the expedition gardener sowed seeds: cabbage, beets, maize, pumpkin, lemon, and others. None were ever seen again.

La Pérouse described the curiosity of the Rapanui: some came aboard his ships and carefully inspected the cables, masts, anchor, steering wheel, etc. The Frenchmen visited Rano Kau and the quarry at Rano Raraku. La Pérouse seems to be the first to postulate that the island once had a dense forest that was cut down by the islanders, causing the barren landscape they observed.

The ships continued on into the Pacific. By 1788 they were in Botany Bay, Australia, where they wintered, and sent a last report to Maréchal de Castries, the French naval minister. Then the *Astrolabe* and *Boussole*, the two frigates that made up the expedition, sailed on, to the northeast towards Tonga and New Caledonia. And they vanished.

But now the mystery seems to be solved. La Pérouse's ships foundered about a mile apart on a reef off Vanikoro, a tiny island in the southern Solomons. Amateur divers began exploring the site in 1981 and made several finds. In 2003, the discovery of a skull gave impetus to the search for a solution to the mystery of the explorer's disappearance. Now a team of divers and historians based in nearby New Caledonia is trying to find the answer to one of the greatest mysteries in France's seafaring history. It is still not known what caused the accident, what became of La Pérouse, or whether anyone survived and escaped from Vanikoro.

The earliest finds from 1981 were remarkable, including thousands of items: a watch, china, glasses, silver salvers and several sculptures. In 1986, to ward off accusations of pilfering, the group joined forces with archaeologists based in Nouméa, thus improving the scientific quality of their work. Many of the discoveries, identified and restored, are on view at the La Pérouse Museum in Albi (the explorer's birthplace in the south of France) and the Museum of Maritime History in New Caledonia.

The fifth expedition in 1999 discovered a "camp" on Vanikoro and found flints, flattened musket balls, nails, uniform buttons, a measuring instrument, and a small cannon. These objects were spread over an area covering some 20 to 30 square meters, and confirmed a local tradition that survivors from the wreck were able to land and built a boat in which to escape.

A later expedition returned in the hope of finding graves adjoining the French camp. But it was the seabed that yielded a major find: hidden in a crack in the outside of the reef at a

depth of 15 meters, divers found a remarkably well-preserved skeleton. Encased in a thick layer of sediment, the skeleton was of a man of medium build, between 31 and 35 years. Because of the perfect condition of his teeth, he was almost certainly an officer or a scientist. Pathologists at France's Institute of Criminal Research in Rosny sous Bois, east of Paris, are still examining the remains. For some time the most likely candidate was the draughtsman Gaspard Duché de Vancy, but DNA tests were inconclusive. Working on a cast of the skull, Elizabeth Daynes, who specializes in making models for palaeontological exhibitions, produced a striking reconstruction of the man's face, but his identity is still unknown.

An expedition of more than 100 participants excavated and searched in and around Vanikoro in May and June in the hope that they may finally answer the question of what happened to La Pérouse's ships and crew.

After Claudine Wéry, Guardian Weekly, April 2005.

WHAT'S NEW IN HANGA ROA

THE RATTY OLD JAIL ON RAPA NUI has been declared "unworthy" by the prefect of Police Investigations for Zone V, who stated that it is not only too small but also in poor condition. The jail is in a house of only 500 square feet and termites have destroyed its wood doors and furniture. The Civil Police invested \$16,000 in an architectural study for a new jail. There was a proposal for \$300,000 but the money never was allocated. The island's chief of police stated that he hopes the money will be forthcoming because a new jail is a high priority item. Only the non-dangerous prisoners are kept in the island jail; the real baddies are put on a plane and sent to Valparaíso.

El Mercurio de Valparaíso, April 18th, 2005.

VANDALISM VS "CONCEPTUAL ART"

A CANADIAN ARTIST, MONTREAL-BASED William Vazan, age 71, was detained on Rapa Nui in April. He was accused of moving rocks of archaeological value in order to create a ground sculpture 10.8 meters long (35 feet) in the outline of an octopus. He also built stone circles ("nests") at Kari Kari, near 'Orongo's sacred site, Mata Ngarau, and at the site of Te Pahu. Attorney Oscar Vargas stated that he discovered another "intervention" in the sector of Puna Pau, where Vazan moved valuable archaeological pieces around.

The administrator of the Rapa Nui National Park said that Vazan's "creations" constitute vandalism because he removed artifacts such as *poro* and *paenga*, but others said the main problem was that he used a sacred place for a personal (foreign) purpose. Both Rapanui and Chilean authorities were upset and angry and wanted Vazan jailed.

Born in Toronto, Vazan taught at the Université du Québec à Montréal and has been a "land artist" since the 1960s, producing works that combine natural forms with imagery reminiscent of ancient traditions. He has completed other "land art" projects in Peru and Chile. Vazan was quoted as saying that he paid an Easter Island resident, Genaro Gatica, 20 years old, to help carry the stones and identify sacred ones so that he could avoid them (however, Gatica is not a Rapanui, so he is unlikely to know sacred from profane).

Vazan's P.R. blurb describes him as being internationally renowned for his Land Art creations, claiming that he spent forty years "investigating the human-cosmos relationship through his Land Art, sculpture, painting and photography." Working at major sites of cultural and historical significance around the world and drawing inspiration from diverse sources, his blurb continues, "... Vazan has evolved a personal cosmology that is 'impressive in scope, mathematically precise in execution, and visually arresting' and 'the product of a curious mind probing the universe.'" [Vazan should have probed the mind of the Rapanui. His Euro-American imperial mindset seemed to give him some sense of privileged right to overwrite Easter Island's major sites of cultural and historical significance.]

The decision of the Rapa Nui Court was to levy a US \$6,200 fine and forbid him to return to the island for two years. He was forced to send a written apology to the Rapanui people, the Consejo de Monumentos Nacionales, the Provincial Government, the Mayor's office, and to CONAF. Thirty-six rolls of pictures he took of his works were destroyed. Vazan was said to be regretful and claims that he "didn't mean it". Gatica was fined for his part in the caper.

Other tourists (Japanese, Italian and Canadian) have been sent to the Rapanui Court in the last few years. In 2003, Yukihisa Sekiguchi of Japan, age 28, carved his name and that of a friend in the shoulder of a *moai* lying horizontally at Ahu Tahira, Vinapu. And in February last year, an Italian, Emmanuelle Puntoni, 32, had to pay \$800 dollars and ask for a pardon in writing and was forbidden to return to the island for one year for spray-painting a *moai*.

Mayor Petero Edmunds criticized both CONAF and the local government and accused them of "making a show" out of the situation which, in his judgment was not so serious. However, it has since been discovered that Vazan managed to smuggle some 80 slides out of Chile; they show seven other 'land forms' that Vazan created around the island, but which are unknown to island authorities. Vazan has published an article about his "work" on Easter Island in a Canadian arts magazine, calling Rapa Nui a "Pacific Prison," and bragging about how he deceived the Chileans.

This type of vandalism is serious. If, fifty years from now, some archaeologist discovers one of Vazan's creations, it will be assumed to have been made by the ancient Rapanui and will totally skew the archaeological record. Vazan's extraordinary actions will be examined further in our next issue.

PETERO EDMUNDS, THE MAYOR of Rapa Nui, was again in the news, complaining to *El Mercurio de Valparaíso* that the island continues to be "forgotten" by mainland Chile. He stated, "As we are the forgotten ones, the government authorities never consider our problems, such as health, the maritime transport problems, our unemployment rate of 18%." He considers the most serious island problem to be the indifference of authorities, and begged President Lagos to appoint someone who has more interest, who will fight for the Rapanui cause, instead of someone who, when told that there is a problem, ignores it.

El Mercurio de Valparaíso, April 18, 2005.

HANGAROA: NEW HOTEL DEVELOPMENT

The following report is printed with special permission from Wayne Bernhardson, whom we thank for sharing it with us.

THERE HAVE BEEN MANY wild rumors about a new hotel Explora to be built on Easter Island. Rumors claim that the "Hostería de Mike" (which apparently will be its name) would have 500 rooms – effectively doubling the size of the island's accommodations. Another rumor suggested they were bringing in prostitutes, probably Russian women. These rumors are obviously absurd, but they do suggest both mistrust and lack of transparency regarding Explora's entry into the island's accommodations market.

Explora is already operating on the island, having rented and refurbished two rather inconspicuous houses near the airport. These are stopgap rentals until the new hotel is constructed. The new hotel will be in a eucalyptus grove on Mike Rapu's six-hectare plot, between Vaitea and the south coast, and not visible from the road.

Many local tourism operators are alarmed by Explora's plans, fearing a domino effect that might lead to a Club Med or worse. They see the precedent of an islander inviting a mainland company to occupy his property as an evasion of the indigenous land law that could multiply in the coming years, even though the property is supposed to be inalienable. According to one source, Mike Rapu has been paid 200 million Chilean pesos (about US\$330,000 for the rights, though he did not confirm this. He did say the hotel itself is a US\$3 million project.

The water issue is one of the serious objections to Explora. Rapa Nui has no surface streams and the hotel would rely on well water. Its water demands could affect neighboring plots and even lead to a saltwater invasion of the aquifer. Pollution by sewage could also be an issue in an area with porous volcanic soils.

According to Víctor Lagos San Martín, head of CONAF on the island, the hotel is not yet a "done deal" (despite the fact that Explora has a large warehouse near the airport and has already shipped in an enormous quantity of construction materials). According to Lagos, the project still has to undergo an environmental review in which water shortages and solid waste will be an issue. He seems to think Explora is pushing the envelope, while Explora appears to be acting with total confidence.

The hotel itself, like the Explora hotels in San Pedro de Atacama and Torres del Paine, will charge around US\$600 per night per person and, according to Mike Rapu, is due to open in January 2007. When the hotel goes into operation, the staff will be around 70, almost all of them Rapanui, and at wages double the current standard rates. Mike Rapu says the hotel will have 30 rooms, not all of which will be occupied at any given time.

The hotel will have a pool, but Mike says that modern filtration will prevent pollution and limit the amount of water extracted from the aquifer. He is indignant that the main opposition to the project is from foreign operators who have settled on Rapanui, and says "we have to raise the level" of accommodations and bring a better quality of tourist to the island, as opposed to backpackers who only spend US\$10 per night for accommodations. These, he says, are the people who cause

most of the island's problems.

Regarding the land tenure issue, he asks, "What would be the difference if I had a loan from the bank to build it myself?" and that Explora is "placing a bet" that the hotel will be successful, since it can only rent rather than own the property, on a renewable five-year lease. Since this is private property, he says, he can do with it as he sees fit though others, as suggested above, consider it an evasion of the indigenous land law.

© Wayne Bernhardson, Ph.D., author of *Moon Handbooks Chile* (new edition due in 2006).

THE MANAGER OF THE NEW EXPLORA HOTEL presented his project to the Rapanui, describing how an upscale hotel will benefit the island, provide employment, give free advertising, etc. He claimed the Explora's interest in this project is due to their need to "close the triangle" – south, north, and east of Chile – with their hotels, and that Easter Island needs a 5-star hotel. However, many Rapanui worry about the island's aquifer, which lies beneath where the hotel will be built, and some question the general agenda of the Explora hotels (their hotel operation in the Atacama desert prohibited locals from using the site's thermal baths). Although local meetings on Rapa Nui failed to draw much attendance, nearly all members of the Camara de Turismo signed a petition against the project. Some Rapanui islanders are looking for help from senators in Santiago; they feel it is like an avalanche; now everyone wants to build hotels, cabañas, guesthouses outside the village – if Explora can, why not the Rapanui? It has become a chain reaction.

INTERVIEWS AND THE "DAY OF PATRIMONY"

A long article about Easter Island appeared in *El Mercurio de Santiago* in May. Written by Macarena Garcia G. and titled (in HUGE headlines), *Mucho Mas Que Moais* [Much more than moai], it noted that the island recently celebrated its "Day of Patrimony" and Ms Garcia interviewed four archaeologists. She began by discussing the moai at Tongariki and its 15 statues, the problems of erosion, and that the statues recently were "waterproofed" with a chemical to help conserve them. Lichens were also cited as destroying agents, affecting both moai and petroglyphs. The article summarizes the Canadian artist, William Vazan, who was fined for creating "land art" from archaeologically significant rocks, and the mayor's astounding response; he said "thanks" because of the "free publicity for the island".

Rapanui islander, Rafael Rapu, who is a specialist in archaeological photography and who has worked on the restoration of nearly all the island's monuments, explained, "If you listen to what the mayor says, you can think that he is a bit crazy, but if you come here and stay awhile, you will realize that what he says is true." He added, "When foreign or Chilean archaeologists arrive, they want to do everything rapidly. But here things are different; there is time to do the other archaeology."

In the early days, archaeologists interviewed local islanders and recorded their stories, but later on, many realized that the islanders confused myth and reality, and "dreamed" up explanations. Rafael Rapu recalled that it was his uncle who told some foreigners that the moai of Ahu Akivi repre-

sented the seven explorers looking towards Hiva, from which they had come. "He dreamed it," said Rapu, "but it is obvious that those moai are looking at the land just like the others." Tour guides still recite the tale invented by Rapu's uncle.

The few islanders who work as archaeologists studied in foreign universities and, even though they know that dreams are not explanations, they continue to give attention to the religious-magical stories of their ancestors. The Rapanui culture is one that gives reverence to the knowledge of the elders. "The old ones always said that the moai walked, and when one asked how, they responded 'with mana,' and the explanation ended there," said Sergio Rapu, brother of Rafael and a respected archaeologist who is responsible for the restoration of some historic sites. "And so I began to think about what the old people were saying because there was a group of students from MIT University who demonstrated mathematically how they could have transported the moai, but the answer was not in the calculations but in the rationalization of the Rapanui." Sergio Rapu is inclined to think that the ancient ones had the answer. "Thinking that the moai walked made me look at the roads where they were transported and I discovered that there, in the road, is the answer: a series of stones placed at a certain distances that made a pivot for the moai. I discovered the feet of the moai! This is new: I just found it several weeks ago. These 'feet of stone' reinforced the theory that the moai were transported vertically, although the usual theory is that these huge statues were moved horizontally". Rapu is convinced that this walking with feet of stones can be a new tourist attraction.

Susana Nahoe, Director of Sernatur [the tourist office], has a degree in archaeology from the University of Chile. She is concerned about the equilibrium between exhibiting the archaeological sites and their conservation, and notes that the main problem is lack of funds: "Now the island is very open to tourism and practically all the sites can be visited, but none receive the care they should have. Only a few have park guards, walking paths, and signs. Many tourists want their picture taken while embracing a moai, including one of the most visited: Tukuturi at Rano Raraku. It has a worn-down right knee from so many people sitting on it while having their picture taken." Nahoe defends her priority for conservation, although some of her Rapanui colleagues differ. One point in dispute is Poike Peninsula where there are petroglyphs, small moai carved from a whitish stone called trachyte, a head that is carved above a natural pool of water (Vai a Heva), and a cave with petroglyphs. She said, "We're going to close Poike...there are no signs and the road is completely eroded by the autos and motorcycles." The Rapu brothers are scandalized by this idea: "The ideal would be to regulate access, not to close it; it is one of the most attractive places on the island!" lamented Rafael. Sergio went further; he has a plan to exploit tourism that even includes modifying the eucalyptus woods at the foot of the volcano by replacing them with typical species, or better, restoring an immense forest as was here before the island became grassland. He added, "That was the first agricultural zone of the island and we could recreate the Rapa Nui system completely there. It is necessary to make a park," he explained enthusiastically. Sonia Haoa, who collaborated with Sergio in the restoration of 'Anakena, is creating a botanical garden with species native to the island. It's

not just for tourists but is a study in archaeo-botany, developed with the University of Sorbonne in an attempt to illuminate how agriculture had been for the first Rapanui. She added, "When I worked at 'Anakena we recognized 200 different skeletons and we put ourselves to work investigating the bones to know how they fed themselves. That interested me."

As Ms Garcia drove back to Hanga Roa with Sonia Haoa, they stopped in the middle of the island and Haoa indicated the grassland where there was apparently nothing of interest to see. "Do you see that?" she asked, indicating a hill. "That is the mountain and the rainwater runs downhill, for agriculture. Over there are stones that, in an inventory of the University of Chile, were said to be *umu* (ovens), but we excavated them and we found that the stones were used to protect the crops." And they found seeds, carbon, and various remains. Haoa was able to catalogue the different types of plants that the men who carved the *moai* ate: sugarcane, different varieties of sweet potato and taro. She now cultivates *toromiro* in a small plot, and observes its development. "The idea of this is to provide ideas for reforestation of the island, to be able to teach farmers how their ancestors cultivated the land."

Agriculture is a key theme on the island and, in the end, for its patrimony. With the idea of acquiring electrical energy from fire, at the end of the 1970s several hectares of eucalyptus were planted. The trees ruined the soil and covered a number of petroglyphs. On the rest of the island, there are a few farms where sweet potato and bananas are grown and these are sold in the market for like a thousand pesos a kilo [78 cents a pound]. "Here there are more horses than people," explained Susana Nahoe, "and they are one of the major problems in that they damage petroglyphs and cause erosion. The horses scratch themselves against the *moai* and walk over the petroglyphs." Sergio Rapu put it in a more global context: "The principal menace for our archaeological patrimony is the way the development of Rapa Nui is being managed."

Restoration of archaeological sites began in the 1960s when Chile decided to eliminate the sheep farm and created the so-called *Ley Pascua* [Pascua Law] that, among other things, assigned a portion of the earnings of the casinos on the continent to the island. With those funds some of the *moai* were put back on their bases. Years later the negative side of restoration became evident: standing *moai* erode faster than those lying down. But the restorers are not to blame; it was the volcanic stone from which the statues were carved. It absorbs water easily but then the surface dries out, leaving the water trapped inside. This weakens the stone and causes the surface to flake off.

Two years ago the mayor mentioned to UNESCO that some *moai* could disappear in five years if they did not receive urgent treatment. His declaration provoked a huge earthquake in the offices of the Consejo de Monumentos Nacionales, but after confused explanations it became clear that what the leader of Easter Island asked was that the project of rescue planned by a German company (with Japanese funds) be hurried up. In January of this year the "waterproofing" of the fifteen standing *moai* at Tongariki was finished. They were treated with a special chemical to protect the rock.

The challenge now is to find \$12,000 dollars for treating

each *moai*. And there are some 800 of them. Local archaeologists agree that petroglyphs also are in danger: "They have suffered the most damage in the past years, because they are carved on fragile lava surfaces or are stepped on by animals." According to archaeologist Edmundo Edwards, "About 4,000 of them have been recorded; there are designs that represent birds, fishes, fishing boats, faces, birdmen and other mythological figures. Some the petroglyphs are difficult to see, the tour guides use a stone to scrape the figures but, in the process, they disfigure the original. The numbers of tourists are increasing, and special paths should be installed to visit these sites. At 'Orongo, there are petroglyph rocks that are in danger of falling into the sea."

El Mercurio de Santiago, May 29, 2005

A CHILEAN COMPANY, Grupo Martinez - AM Holding, which operates four gambling casinos in Chile, is planning to build one on Easter Island, plus one each in Antofagasta, Chiloe, Concepción, and Rancagua. Recently a law was passed in Chile permitting more casinos per Región, and AM Corp, as they are called, made a proposal on July 5th to the Superintendent of Casinos. A spokesman for AM Holding, a Sr. Martinez, said that they are bidding on the casino on Easter Island because it is one of the three greatest tourist destinations in Chile, and: "...the idea is to complement the tremendous tourist potential on the island that is focused on its beauties and its thousand-year culture..." and "We wish to help give a complete change to the island...."

Also bidding on the casinos are companies from the United States (Thunderbird and Pinnacle Entertainment); from Panama (Latin Gaming); from Spain (Egasa and Cirsa), and Hamburg Holding, Germany. These companies are investing millions of dollars in the bidding process. The article concludes with, "The Easter Island project is directed toward a public different from that in Viña del Mar", explained Sr. Martinez, adding that, "It would not eliminate competition ... from other casinos." The evaluation of the project presentations will begin after August 4th, and the final decision will be made in May, 2006. Would this be the end of the island as we know it?

El Mercurio de Valparaíso, 6 June, 2005.

RAPA NUI STUDENTS LIVING IN SANTIAGO are collecting signatures in protest against the construction of a gambling casino on Rapa Nui. Their arguments range from the island's infrastructure not being prepared for so many visitors, to the risks for the archaeological sites, and the negative impact a casino would have on the island's culture.

YOUNG RAPANUI AGAINST THE CASINO

By Mahina Pakomio (translation by Olaug Andreassen)

IT IS NOT ONLY THE ISLAND COMMUNITY that is divided between pro and cons concerning the project of a possible Rapa Nui casino – but also students living on the Chile mainland.

A presentation of the casino project, "Enjoy Rapa Nui," was held at a Santiago university on August 24. Rapanui university students were the audience, and the speaker was Maeva Riroroko. Her father, Petero Riroroko, is the main investor in this project, in association with the biggest gambling

operator in Chile, the AM Corp/Martinez group. The project will include a casino, amphitheatre, museum, cinema, conference hall, children's area, bars, restaurants and shops. Maeva presented details about the construction and the costs and she invited the Rapanui to participate by offering some 150 jobs for up to ten years duration, providing everything would "work out". She explained that the approximately 17 million dollars that the casino would generate would go to the Municipality and would therefore benefit the students – because there would be more scholarships.

However, the students rejected the project and defended their island with very good arguments: the island's heritage would be destroyed, there would be more vice and, most importantly, a casino would have a tremendous environmental and social impact. One student said: "We study because we believe we can make a better future for the island, not because we want to try to solve the island's problems with a casino!"

The students created a protest list to be signed by all Rapanui students in Chile as well as friends of the island. The list will be sent to Governor Enrique Pakarati, who is also one of the principal opponents of the project. Another copy will go to the Superintendencia de Casino, a State commission responsible for deciding whether the project will be realized or not.

Many Chileans are willing to join the cause. Amongst them is the director of the Centre of Rapa Nui Studies (University of Valparaíso), José Miguel Ramírez. There will be more meetings and protests in Viña del Mar/Valparaíso and also at Iquique where more Rapa Nui students live. The Superintendencia de Casinos will make a decision on June 4th, 2006.

A NEW LAW FOR EASTER ISLAND? For many years the Rapanui have criticized the way in which the central government has treated them, and that being dependent upon the Vth Region prejudices them economically as well as socially. But this perception and the feeling of not belonging to the country could end if a new law passes Congress. This is the Special Statute of Administration of the Island, delivered by a special committee to President Ricardo Lagos last Monday. It states, among other things, that the island will no longer depend administratively on Valparaíso. And so, an island government, under the Department of the Interior, would have similar faculties to those of a region. This implies that Public Works or Health no longer would depend upon the Vth Region but directly on the central government. The government would be in charge of foreign matters, security, emergencies, and catastrophes. The municipality would manage tourism, the environment, education, and health, among others. Congresswoman Maria Eugenia Mella (Christian Democrat) supports it. "It would put in order a de facto situation. The islanders have told me in the past that they would rather be connected directly with Santiago I agree that it would generate equality in the region. When there is a development project for the island, there are no special resources for it, and it is charged to the Region, making the distribution unequal," Congressman Juan Bustos concurred: "The project implies the recognition of a different ethnic group and the original people. Furthermore, the island always has felt itself connected to the Central Government. And this would make certain better protection for the island, more

resources, and better perspectives for positioning itself in the international tourism industry." Not all Congressmen were in favor. Gonzalo Ibanez said that he "was a little skeptical of the idea that we can solve problems with laws. The problems of the island are not necessarily because of its dependence on the Vth Region. I don't believe that this will change the luck of the territory. This needs an integrated development project with emphasis on tourism." The island awaits the result.

El Mercurio de Valparaíso, August 2, 2005

RESIDENCY RULES FOR RAPA NUI

A new law is expected to be unveiled in Chile next week, an effort to stop the indigenous population from being overrun by people from the mainland. Because the plan does not discuss autonomy for the island, some indigenous Rapanui have criticized it for not going far enough. But there is widespread local support for a proposal to limit migration from the mainland by introducing rules of residency. Some 4,000 people live on Easter Island but only about 1,800 of them are part of the Rapa Nui community with links to the original inhabitants. The rest of the population is from mainland Chile, or other countries. Currently any Chilean can live on Easter Island, although they cannot buy land. Many Rapanui feel they are being overrun and losing their culture and language. One group on the island is pushing for full autonomy for the island, and told the BBC that the limit on migration was the only major change in the package. But Nicholas Haoa, who believes the island must retain economic links with Chile to survive, was more positive. He said the Chilean government has finally listened to the people. Chilean President Ricardo Lagos is due to unveil the new law of administration soon and it will require support from congress and changes to the Chilean constitution.

Clinton Porteous, BBC News, Santiago. 7 August 2005.

EASTER ISLAND'S NEW HIGH SCHOOL north of the village is now in use although construction is still ongoing. So half the school, while new, looks to have already have received a few years use, at least, and the other end of the school is still under construction, with re-bar exposed. The buildings were designed to fit in with the landscape and there are lots of open air sections, including parts of the dining area. The buildings wind their way uphill and the entrance is aligned with one of the solstices. Students have a long school day from 8:30 am to 5 pm. They walk, bike, or use private cars, taxis, or car pools to get back and forth. When it rains, however, there is chaos; the first two weeks of school were suspended because of heavy rains. Funds have been applied for to convert the old *colonia* buildings (the leper sanatorium) into an art center. Some parents complain that the large eucalyptus forest close to the school has become a clandestine retreat for students who smoke and/or "make out" there.

THE SHORELINE BELOW Ahu Runga Vae is being eroded by action of surf and waves. Crews have been working to stabilize the coast; boulders were placed to shore up the area and while this will help, erosion still continues from water runoff during rainstorms. Erosion also continues at other places along the south coast: the crematorium at Hanga Hahave has eroded three meters.

SOME RECENT STATISTICS ABOUT RAPA NUI: The 3,700 inhabitants have nearly 1,500 houses, 1,800 vehicles, 1,000 télévisions, 700 telephones, and 260 computers, 70% of which are connected to the internet. At present there are 12 hotels, plus cabañas and residenciales; an airport and a port. The latter are the ports of entry for tourists who, in 2004, numbered 34,000.

A CHILEAN ORTHODONTIST, Jaime Briones, sent a letter to the Editor of *El Mercurio de Valparaíso* to inform readers that he has e-mailed three times to the island's mayor, Petero Edmunds, and also tried calling him on the telephone, but to no avail. He wanted to stress to the mayor that the island desperately needs a dentist, that Rapanui have to suffer toothaches and knocked-out teeth, or else go to the mainland for dental care. He stated that he, personally, would be happy to volunteer.

El Mercurio de Valparaíso for 21 May 2005

THE RAPA NUI LANGUAGE ACADEMY/COMMISSION. Last December, in the Provincial Governor's offices, some forty Rapanui assembled to read and accept a tentative draft of by-laws and to formally register their intent to establish a private, non-profit Academia de la Lengua Rapa Nui. Legal approval and recognition by the government are currently being sought. Initially, a provisional acting board of directors was selected, however, the new current board – of which Virginia Haoa is President – was elected for one year. The matter of determining just who will be the 36 permanent Rapanui members of the Academy is still in flux. And some work is needed to better define the language needs and objectives, and to orient the community.

The Academy meets weekly and is beginning to address issues of alphabet, spelling, and the creation of neologisms. During a one-hour long television program in June, a few of the members explained to the community about these issues and about the Academy that is being established. Overall the reaction and participation of the Rapanui population has been favorable. One concern is how to motivate the majority of adults who still lack fluency, and even interest, in reading in the Rapanui language.

EARTHQUAKE TREMORS IN THE REGION around Rapa Nui prompted a note in *El Mercurio de Valparaíso* (June 28, 2005), about strong tremors in the zone around the island, and wondered about the catastrophe of a tsunami that might result from the quakes, and if the Rapanui were prepared for such a disaster. Between June 16 and June 28, there were 13 quakes listed for the region around Easter Island. While they have been of 5.7 or less, there were five quakes on June 23rd alone. They have been occurring at a depth of ten km.

THE LATEST "EXPLORER'S LOG" (Vol. 37, No. 3) 2005, states that John Loret, Robert Hemm, and Marcelo Mendez returned from a "flag expedition" to Easter Island where, along with eleven other members of the Explorer's Club, they surveyed a 'newly discovered ahu with two moai... They measured and recorded the exposed ahu and moai and surveyed the surrounding areas, taking extensive photographs both "on the ground and from the air". Nowhere does this item mention

where this "newly discovered ahu" is located or how it was photographed from the air. Levitation?

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

- Bentley, R.A., M. Pietrusewsky, M. T. Douglas, and T. C. Atkinson. 2005. Matrilocality during the prehistoric transition to agriculture in Thailand? *Antiquity* 79:1-17.
- Bulletin de la Société des Etudes Océaniques (Polynésie orientale)*, No. 302. Mai 2005 (175 pages; seo@archives.gov.pf). This issue contains "Histoire des écoles aux îles Marquises (1858-1904)" by Frère Joseph Le Port; "Tiki, témoins du Fenua 'enata" by Pierre Ottino; "Archéologie du chien marquisien" by Sidsel Millerstrom; "Le me'ae Taka'oa" by Robert Suggs; "Quand découvrir c'est perdre, ou de la disparition des objets dans les Mers du Sud", by Emily Donaldson; "Mise à jour réglementaire des mises au jour archéologiques" by Robert Koenig; and "Le temps en Océanie" by Jean Guiart.
- Le Bulletin du Centre d'Etudes sur l'Île de Pâques et la Polynésie* (CEIPP), 78, juillet 2005. Délégation de la Polynésie française à Paris, 28, boulevard Saint-Germain, 75005, Paris France. No. 79 contains an article by Raymond Duranton regarding two contradictory rongorongo designs.
- Cochrane, E. E., M. Pietrusewsky, and M. T. Douglas. 2004. Culturally modified human remains recovered from an earth-oven interment on Waya Island, Fiji. *Archaeology in Oceania* 39: 54-59.
- Kirch, P. V., S. O'Day, J. Coil, M. Morgenstein, K. Kawelu, and S. Millerstrom. 2003. The Kaupikiawa Rockshelter, Kalaupapa Peninsula, Moloka'i: New Investigations and Reinterpretation of its Significance for Hawaiian Prehistory. *People and Culture in Oceania* 19:1-27.
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- Pietrusewsky, M. and M. T. Douglas. 2002. *Ban Chiang, A Prehistoric Site in Northeast Thailand. I: The Human Skeletal Remains*. University Museum Monograph 111. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Ar-